ARIZONA STATE VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD
1740 W. ADAMS ST., SUITE 4600, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007
PHONE (602) 364-1PET (1738) FAX (602) 364-1039
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BY:

COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION FORM

If there is an issue with more than one veterinarian please file a separate Complaint Investigation Form for each veterinarian

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received: Dec. 2, 2019 Case Number: 20-49

A. THIS COMPLAINT IS FILED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING:

Name of Veterinarian/CVT: Dr Edwards

Premise Name: Arizona Small Animal Clinic

Premise Address: 10 E 31rst Street

City: Tucson State: AZ Zip Code: 85713

Telephone: (520) 622-6231

B. INFORMATION REGARDING THE INDIVIDUAL FILING COMPLAINT*:

Name: Caroline Dugan

Address: [redacted]

City: [redacted] State: [redacted] Zip Code: [redacted]

Home Telephone: [redacted] Cell Telephone: [redacted]

**STATE LAW REQUIRES WE HAVE TO DISCLOSE YOUR NAME UNLESS WE CAN SHOW THAT DISCLOSURE WILL RESULT IN SUBSTANTIAL HARM TO YOU, SOMEONE ELSE OR THE PUBLIC PER A.R.S. § 41-1010. IF YOU HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SUBSTANTIAL HARM WILL RESULT IN DISCLOSURE OF YOUR NAME PLEASE PROVIDE COPIES OF RESTRAINING ORDERS OR OTHER DOCUMENTATION.*

C. **PATIENT INFORMATION (1):**

Name: Lisa Dugan

Breed/Species: Pug/chihuahua

Age: 14 Sex: F Color: Black some Gray

PATIENT INFORMATION (2):

Name: _____

Breed/Species: _____

Age: _____ Sex: _____ Color: _____

D. **VETERINARIANS WHO HAVE PROVIDED CARE TO THIS PET FOR THIS ISSUE:**

Please provide the name, address and phone number for each veterinarian.

Dr. Edwards

E. **WITNESS INFORMATION:**

Please provide the name, address and phone number of each witness that has direct knowledge regarding this case.

I am unsure of all the employees names that were there but they are on the police report. Myself Caroline Dugan//My son Micah Dugan

Tucson Police Department case #191126 0002
Det Cajas
#0630

Attestation of Person Requesting Investigation

By signing this form, I declare that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Further, I authorize the release of any and all medical records or information necessary to complete the investigation of this case.

Signature: Caroline Dugan

Date: 11-26-19

F. **ALLEGATIONS and/or CONCERNS:**

Please provide all information that you feel is relevant to the complaint. This portion must be either typewritten or clearly printed in ink.

I was taking lisa to get check out after I thought she may have had a stroke. While we were speaking with Dr Edwards she began to antaganize me and ask me if I wanted my dog or don't I? I said I need to weigh the options. "There are no options you either want the dog or you don't?"

When I began to ask questions about care she started yelling at me "why didn't I bring her in sooner" and I told her why or I tried but everytime I would try to say something or ask a question she would start yelling at me and telling me I need to take her to a nureolgist and I need to do all these test and I can't afford all these these test. When I asked about price she would say "it doesn't matter you either want the dog or you don't". When she finally gave me prices I told her I can't afford all that and what are my options? While I'm in tears because my dog is hurt? I being yelled at by someone who is suposed to be there to help me and my family while we are there not yell at people and insult them. She just kept going on and on about how she needs a nuerologist and all these test before she could even give me any information. I said I could afford a few of them and what could we do within reason and she wouldn't hear of it. It was all or nothing.

And mind you my son and her employee is watching all of this and being put in the middle. Dr Edwards even tired telling me that a human would be denied treatment at an ER for life threathing issues. I couldn't believe my ears.

I finally tried to get my dog and leave and she physically grab ahold of my dog and her asstant and prevented my from getting my dog and leaving.

My son finally got up and told her that was enough and we were taking our dog and leaving. She got in his face and started pushing him because he told were are leaving and did happen to make a rude comment to her (and while I didn't think that was necessary) I dont' at all blame after her behavior.

As she physically pushed my son out the door I was able to convience her assistance to allow me to take my pets and go. (My other dog Coco was there with us also but did not directly involve her).

While I was leaving and made my way to the loby Dr. Ewards came back in and tried once again to physically take my dog away from me and insist on finishing the exam even after all of this.

I had already started calling 911 when Dr Edwards came back into the lobby while I was on my way out. (this was after she was finished physically pushing my son out the door when all we were trying to do was leave in the first place and she wouldn't allow us too!!!!!)

NOT ALLOWING someone to leave when they want is called kidnapping.

How do allow someone like this to keep practice medicine I cannot even fathum.

The only reason I came back to her this time was because she is lower cost and I know she is a passionate person and loves animals..When my dog Shela had cancer we had one of her several suregerys with Dr Ewards and when we had decided to finally put her to sleep because she was having no quaility of life living indoors with no sun when she loves outside and going in her pool and play with the other 3 dogs who and can come and go in and out as they please through their doggie door.

Dr. Edwards yelled at my father and I who was with me because Shelia was his dog too. She tried to tell us it would cost $500 to put her to sleep and we should spend that to do another surgery instead and we didn't want to put her through any more. The surgurey Dr Edwards did for her was not the only one she had. She was less expensive. But that doesn't give you the right to belittle people and yell at them and

Repeat of sentence since it was cut off ....

But that doesn't give her the right to belittle people or yell at them.

This is a hard enough situation to be in, why would she make it harder by behaving that way. If she doesn't like he job she should find another career.

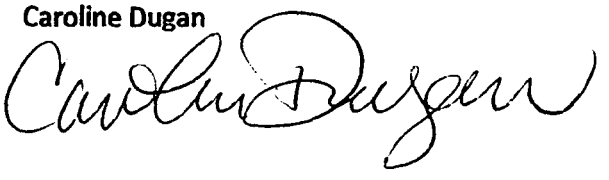
My son told me that the officer told him that she wasn't going to charge us for services. Well if that were really true.. I wouldn't have been having an argument over the cost of the services she wanted done. Which she did list in order how much they each test would cost. Then after I was already on the phone with the police she had the nerve to try to call them herself on me as we were in the wrong somehow.

I just can't even believe what happened and this woman should not be allowed to have a medical license.

I am so sorry for needing to take up your time with this but this couldn't be left alone.

Thank you

Caroline Dugan



Ms Dugan presented her dog Coco for a dental consult that never occurred, and her dog Lisa for what she described as a stroke. She was fairly distraught and somewhat incoherent while I was attempting to get a complete history. Ms Dugan informed all of us over and over that she couldn't afford to do anything until today and that she thought Lisa had a stroke. It was very difficult to get an answer to any question without Ms Dugan talking about a multitude of unrelated personal issues. In an attempt to narrow down the issue with Lisa I asked a lot of questions that caused Ms Dugan to become very angry with "all you vets".

During the exam it became apparent that Lisa had some significant issues and when I listed these Ms Dugan became even more distraught. Due to her circling, nystagmus, and head tilt the exam was very challenging to perform without undue stress to Lisa. I had her on the table with the aid of my vet assistants for the exam. I would restrain her for part of the exam then let her relax before repeating these actions again. The entire time I was explaining to the client what I was finding. It was slow going but it was progressing. I was also trying to respond to the barrage of questions being thrown at me while Ms Dugan and her son were bickering and arguing. Mostly I was forced to tell her that further testing by a specialist would be necessary to answer that question and then I proceeded on to attempt to explain what I did know and how I would next proceed and the cost.

It was during all this that I finally firmly told Ms Dugan what lab work and x rays I could do and that I would not allow her to make payments. I informed her that a referral to Pima Pet Clinic would be my recommendation and they accepted Care Credit allowing her to make payments. At this point Ms Dugan's son jumped up from the bench and charged across the room at me. He yelled " you fucking cunt" and "chest butted" me, in other words he pushed me with his body, throwing me onto the exam table and nearly knocking me down. I grabbed Lisa to prevent her from being thrown to the floor when the table tipped. After I caught myself on the counter I placed Lisa on the floor and turned to Ms Dugan's son. He had his fists clenched and was aggressively continuing to push into me. I was now faced with protecting all my employees, the dogs, Ms Dugan and myself. Luckily Ms Dugan's son did not punch me when I blocked him and actually backed up when I refused to back down I very quietly told him to "leave the building right now" over and over. He backed out of the exam room and charged into the lobby yelling. I closed the lobby gate behind me and continued to block him from returning to the exam room. He stepped out the front door still yelling and I quickly closed the door and locked it on him. He left the porch when he found it locked. I then called 911 and waited on the line until the officer was dispatched.

Lisa was wandering around in the lobby behind me so I scooped her up and walked back into the exam room where Ms Dugan still was along with my employees. I told Ms Dugan that I wanted to finish the exam of Lisa while we waited. She grabbed Lisa quite forcefully from my arms and went out to the lobby. When she realized I had locked her son out of the building she tried to let him back in. I refused to allow this and she finally left the building with the dogs and I quickly locked the door behind her. The police officer arrived then and she and her son walked across the parking lot and charged up to the officer. When he came to the door I unlocked and he came in and took my statement. He then went out and returned. I did not press charges and

received 12/23/19

I was encouraged to get a restraining order against both of them. The officer gave me the case number and then left.

I no longer perform euthanasias except in extreme emergencies and I had firmly explained that to Ms Dugan when she asked if she should just put the dog down. I explained that I could not give her a diagnosis with out at least basic diagnostic testing and that if she wanted to euthanize I could give her a referral because I did not do euthanasias anymore. I also explained to her several times what lab tests and the costs of those tests would be. I could not satisfy her demands and I tried several times to refer her for a more complete work up to answer all her demands. Ms Dugan's son was her guest for the appointment and he physically attacked me in my own clinic. The police were called and proper logical actions were undertaken. I immediately noted the events in the record while my memory was fresh.
We were all very lucky that no one was hurt.

Shananne Edwards DVM

SHANANNE EDWARDS DVM
December 15, 2019

DOUGLAS A. DUCEY
- GOVERNOR -

VICTORIA WHITMORE
- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -

ARIZONA STATE VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

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INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Arizona State Veterinary Medical Examining Board

FROM: AM Investigative Committee: Robert Kritsberg, D.V.M. - Chair
Jarrod Butler, D.V.M.
Christina Tran, D.V.M.
Carolyn Ratajack
Steven Seiler

STAFF PRESENT: Tracy A. Riendeau, CVT – Investigations
Dawn Halbrook, Compliance Specialists
Mary D. Williams, Assistant Attorney General

RE: Case: 20-49
Complainant(s): Caroline Dugan
Respondent(s): ShanAnne Edwards, D.V.M. (License: 1969)

SUMMARY:
Complaint Received at Board Office: 12/2/19
Committee Discussion: 2/4/20
Board IIR: 3/18/20

APPLICABLE STATUTES AND RULES:
Laws as Amended August 2018 (Lime Green); Rules as Revised September 2013 (Yellow).

On November 26, 2019, "Lisa," a 14-year-old Pug mix was presented to Respondent for a possible stroke. A verbal and physical altercation occurred over treatment and fees, Complainant left and the police were called.

Complainant was noticed and appeared telephonically.
Respondent was noticed and appeared telephonically. Attorney David Stoll appeared.

The Committee reviewed medical records, testimony, and other documentation as described below:

- Complainant(s) narrative: *Caroline Dugan*
- Respondent(s) narrative/medical record: *ShanAnne Edwards, DVM*
- Witness(es) statement: *Respondent's staff*

PROPOSED 'FINDINGS of FACT':

1. On November 26, 2019, according to Complainant, she presented her dog to Respondent due to possible stroke. While speaking with Respondent, Complainant stated Respondent asked her if she wanted the dog or not, antagonizing her. Respondent also yelled at her, asking why she did not bring the dog in sooner. She also told Complainant that the dog would need to be taken to a neurologist for diagnostics. Complainant explained that she could not afford all of the testing Respondent recommended but could do some and asked for costs of testing. Respondent continued to yell and belittle Complainant.

2. At that point, Complainant stated that she attempted to take the dog and leave but Respondent physically grabbed the dog and prevented Complainant from leaving. Complainant's son became upset and advised they were leaving; Respondent pushed Complainant's son, therefore he said a rude comment to her. Respondent then proceeded to push Complainant's son out the door. Complainant stated that she convinced Respondent's staff to let her take her dogs and leave. However, while leaving the premises, Respondent attempted to take Complainant's dog as she wanted to finish the exam. Complainant stated she called the police at this time.

3. According to Respondent and her staff, the dog was presented to Respondent due to possible stroke. Complainant was distraught and incoherent when giving the dog's history. Respondent began examining the dog and advised Complainant that the dog had significant issues; circling, head tilt, nystagmus. Respondent stated that she was trying to answer the multiple questions Complainant was asking until she was forced to tell Complainant that further testing by a specialist would be necessary to answer many of her questions. Respondent attempted to explain what she did know and how to proceed and the costs.

4. Respondent stated that she recommended blood work and radiographs but would not allow Complainant to make payments. She advised that a referral would be best and Pima Pet Clinic accepted Care Credit. At this point, Complainant's son stood up, became verbally abusive and then chest-butted Respondent, throwing her into the table and almost knocking her over. Respondent was able to grab the dog off the table before it tipped and set her on the floor. Complainant's son continued to be aggressive and push Respondent; Respondent told him to leave the clinic and once out the door, the door was locked. Respondent called 911 and waited on the line until police were dispatched.

5. Respondent retrieved the dog that was wandering in the lobby and went back into the exam room with Complainant, and her employees, to complete the exam on the dog. Complainant grabbed the dog from her and went into the lobby. When Complainant saw her son was locked out of the building, she attempted to let him back in but Respondent refused this to happen. Complainant finally left the premises and the door was locked behind her.

6. When police arrived, he took a statement from Respondent; she did not press charges and was encouraged to obtain a restraining order.

7. Respondent further explained that she no longer performs euthanasia services except in extreme situations. She had told Complainant this when asked if she should put the dog down.

Respondent would give Complainant a referral if she elected to euthanize the dog. Since Respondent could not satisfy Complainant's demands, she tried several times to refer her for a complete work up to answer all her questions.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:

The Committee discussed there were discrepancies in the testimony on how the incident occurred. There was no clear understanding of the physical altercation between Complainant's son and Respondent. There was not a statement from Complainant's son; however Respondent's staff's statements appeared to have aligned with Respondent's version of the situation.

Complainant could have been nervous about the condition of the dog and the fact that she had to wait for approximately an hour to be seen. Complainant also had financial constraints. All of these factors could had have exacerbated the situation which led to the incident. The Committee felt this could have been handled differently and should have not reached the level it did.

COMMITTEE'S PROPOSED CONCLUSIONS of LAW:

The Committee concluded that no violations of the *Veterinary Practice Act* occurred.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION:

Motion: It was moved and seconded the Board:

Dismiss this issue with no violation.

Vote: The motion was approved with a vote of 5 to 0.

The information contained in this report was obtained from the case file, which includes the complaint, the respondent's response, any consulting veterinarian or witness input, and any other sources used to gather information for the investigation.

Tracy A. Riendeau, CVT
Investigative Division